WILLIAM UPDICK
HIS PHILOSOPHY

W. LETTERMAN SMITH

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WILLIAM UPDICK:

His Philosophy

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His Philosophy

William Henry

By

W. LETTERMAN SMITH

New York and Washington

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CHAPTER I

Street and Court

Brandywine Street and Temperance Court were opposed the one to the other; and quite properly so, if there be anything in a name.

It would be quite far from the truth, however, to say that the majority of those who lived in Temperance Court were temperate, or that all who lived on Brandywine Street were tipplers, for there were drinking men and women, and many of them, too, in the Court; and some, although not many, it is true, of the people living on the Street who were sober and decent. Moreover, there were five saloons, dram shops and groggeries rather, in Temperance Court, which was but two blocks long; and there was a temperance hotel, a shabby and ill-patronized place, it must be confessed, at the lower end of Brandywine Street.

There was not the best of feeling between the women of the Street and those of the

Court. Prejudice and ill-feeling were strong; and in consequence quarrels between neighbors were bitter and of frequent occurrence. Mrs. Cunster, of the Street, would hold her head high and draw in her skirts as she passed Mrs. Puyder, of the Court; or Mrs. Boveen would give Mrs. Cunster some impudence; or Mrs. Probenster at her window would make faces at Mrs. Kennelling while the latter was hanging up the week's wash in her little back yard; or Mrs. Flannery would shake her fist in Mrs. Rusic's face as they met in the alley, between the Court and the Street. Then these troubles, exaggerated fourfold, would be poured into the ears of husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons when they came home from work, and thus the men, who were generally friendly enough among themselves, would sometimes be drawn into these strifes, and many a row in the groggeries was occasioned by the home recital of these exaggerated slights and wrongs.

CHAPTER II

Industrial and Social Conditions

If the social conditions of the Court and the Street were unsatisfactory, the industrial conditions, limiting that term as affecting the workingmen only, were even worse.

There was little trouble, indeed, to secure work in the rolling mills and factories, all of which were running on full time, and often overtime, too, to fill the large rush orders that came in. But while work was to be had, wages were low, "starvation wages" the workingmen called them; and rest days were few and far between. It was work, work, work, grind, grind, grind, from Sunday morning to Sunday morning. And it was ten hours a day, from seven o'clock in the morning to six in the evening, with an hour off at noon; or the same length of time for those on night turn; and frequently overtime, too, until nine o'clock at night, or nine in the morning, according as the men worked by day or by night, and with but little extra pay for extra

time. The wages of ordinary workmen were a dollar and a quarter a day, and those who received such wages could afford to live on Brandywine Street. But there were those who did the roughest work, and hard work it was, too, who were paid but one dollar a day, and some of them received even less, and were of necessity compelled to live in Temperance Court, or in a similar crowded and noisome neighborhood, for in this section of the great city race suicide was as far from actual fulfillment as was the thought of it.

As a result of these conditions those who should have lived in comfort upon the wages they fairly earned and were justly entitled to, were compelled, because of the cupidity of their employers, to live in poverty and distress.

Children barefooted and scantily clad even in the coldest weather; women half clothed and half shod; men ragged and unkempt; houses much out of repair, sagging and decaying, were all striking evidences of the pinching poverty that had settled down upon those who were helping to make rich their

employers, their city, their State, their country.

Lawlessness? Of course. What else could be expected under such conditions? If one law of the Decalogue be broken, why not another, why not every one? And was not the example of the employers, men who seemed to regard the rights neither of God nor man, ever before them? So these poor, oppressed people might have logically reasoned. But they did not reason, they acted. And so all the laws, Divine and human, were ruthlessly trampled under foot; not, of course, by every one of these poor people, for there were some who, in the midst of poverty and wretchedness and evil environment, maintained their integrity and virtue.

Gambling hells, dens of infamy, groggeries, dives, ruining men and women, body, and mind, and soul, infested and blighted the whole neighborhood. And all of these places of evil resort, with the collusion of policemen and of those higher in authority, were open day and night, week-day and Sunday. As a result sin abounded, evil of every sort and degree was practised, and crimes of the darkest sort were of frequent occurrence.

CHAPTER III

The Crisis

Of course, general discontent prevailed among the workingmen. There were mutterings of a gathering storm. Men met in little groups at street corners or in saloons, cursed their employers, discussed the situation, and considered plans for relief.

The need of the hour was a leader, one who might combine, control and guide this unorganized mass of men and lead them out of bondage into liberty. Such a leader appeared in the person of William Updick, shortened by his associates into Billy Updy, in appearance tall, broad-shouldered, light-haired, blue-eyed, a handsome bachelor of fifty, upon whom apparently no impression had been made by his landlady, Mrs. Torkey, a buxom widow of forty or thereabouts, whose home on Brandywine Street gave food and shelter to half a dozen or more men of the mill. She, however, seemed to care

only for Mr. Updick, for whom she cherished and displayed an ardent affection, much to the amusement of her boarders, who rigged Mr. Updick constantly upon his good fortune in having caught the eye and the heart of the widow Torkey, and they advised him to embrace the opportunity, which "opportunity" was of nearly two hundred pounds' weight, hasten the courtship and precipitate the marriage, all of which he took good naturedly enough.

A born leader of men was William Updick; a man of little schooling, but of considerable knowledge of the picked-up sort, for he had traveled about the country a good deal, and through hearsay, and observation, and experience had gathered many bits of wisdom which he had stored away in his memory, carefully labelled and ready for use when needed. Moreover, he was naturally quick-witted, and something of a philosopher, too, in his way, a man of great heart, warm impulses, quick sympathy, helpful disposition—a man, therefore, well-known, popular, and beloved among the working people, and ever known an respected by foremen and

employers. Here, then, was just the man for the time; just the man to meet the crisis, to control the seething mass, to gather, combine, and organize the scattered forces of labor and lead on to victory.

Himself feeling keenly the hardships he suffered through injustice, and observing the yet greater hardships endured by others, the great soul of this good man was stirred within him, his sympathies were aroused for his fellow-sufferers, and his indignation was kindled against those who were responsible for such misery; and now, seizing the opportunity, he assumed leadership by gathering together a number of his friends and suggesting to them the advisability of calling a meeting of all the workingmen in the city to consider plans and take immediate steps for the improvement of their condition. The suggestion offered was received with great enthusiasm, and Mr. Updick, by common consent, was chosen to preside at the meeting and talk to the men on the subject of their grievance.

Word was quickly passed through every factory and mill in the city, and at the time appointed the public hall of the neighbor-

hood, capable of accommodating fifteen hundred men or more, was filled to overflowing.

As William Updick came upon the platform and looked out over the mass of rude, excited men, his heart failed him for an instant; only for an instant, however, for he had faith in God, faith in himself, and faith in the righteousness of their cause—and faith makes strong. Strong, therefore, he appeared before the great assembly while loud cheers and discordant shouts and calls rolled and roared through the great hall, up to the rafters and down again in confusing echoes. Never before had the old walls looked upon such a scene of disorder. And amid the uproar, as a great rock in a tumultuous sea, stood the leader, calm and unmoved, his hand upraised, waiting for silence.

At last—it seemed an hour to the man waiting to be heard, though in reality it was not more than a few moments—comparative quiet was restored, and as the speaker proceeded in his vigorous and telling speech the men listened attentively, and quietly too, save as some telling point made roused them to enthusiastic demonstration. For half an hour

or more the speaker held and swayed his audience at will—a tremendous power, but in this instance a power used effectively and well.

"My boys," he began, "you kin starve on nothin', but you and your famblies can't live on nothin'. And me and you's gittin' precious near nothin' fer all the hard work we's a doin'. They's many of you thet's run down at the heel; and those of you thet's got wives and childrens looks at 'em ev'ry day in their rags and wretchedness. We works like dogs, and we's treated like slaves. Thet's it in a nuthull.

"I ain't got a word to say fer these lazy loafers round here thet's alus a complainin'. They don't deserve livin' wages; and starwation wages's too good fer 'em. And as fer you boys as spends your earnin's, or the best of 'em, fer drink, I ain't got no better word fer you neither. You goes a paradin' about in a zig-zag way thet's not werry pleasin' nor commendin' neither. I'm not a talkin' to lazy, drinkin' loafers, but to you boys who's stiddy and sober. Now listen partickler to wot I've got to say.

"We's bein' robbed. Robbed! Robbed

of our money that we've earned by hard work, and plenty of it, too. If I'm gettin' one dollar and a quarter a day w'en I'm a-earin' a dollar seventy-five, where's the fifty? I ain't a gittin' it. Somebuddy's robbed me, and got my fifty cents. Who is it? Who's the thief? And they says to us, 'Well, who's to jedge wot's fair and square? Is't the workingman or the manoofactoorer?' I says it's neither. Right and jestice's to decide. Is a man's ten hours' work worth a dollar twenty-five, or a dollar seventy-five? I calls in right and jestice to say w'ich. I calls upon the unconsarned people to rise up and speak w'ich it is, alus rememberin' thet we's not Dagoes, nor Hunkeys, nor Hottentots, but good American citizens. If we's to live as them, then a dollar's a fortune; but we's Americans, leastways we's here in America, and oughter live like Americans, and wot with high rents and high prices fer ev'rythin' we can't, with large famblies, live much above the brutes on a dollar, or a dollar and a quarter, a day. Now can we? I puts it to you, can we?"

Cries of "No, no, we can't! Shame! Shame! Let's fight for our rights!" came

from all parts of the house, and there was great excitement. But the speaker soon calmed the tumult and proceeded with his speech.

"I ain't got no large fambly, none at all, but I'm a speakin' for you thet has—and the most of you has. No, we must have wot we earns if the childrens, bless their little hearts, 's to be raised up and eddicated as they's a right to be, and the women's to have wot they need.

"But they's more to it, my boys. We's robbed of our rest day. Some of us never gits a day off."

"That's right, Billy Updy. You're right there! I'm one of 'em." "And I'm another." "And I'm another," came from all parts of the hall.

"Yes, some of us never gits a day off; and it's black looks, and grudgin' consent, if it ain't wages docked, to git off a day even to bury our dead. Some of us's fortnit enough to git a day off onct in a while. But ev'ry Sunday's ours by right. We don't git it, do we?"

Cries of "No, no, Billy Updy, that we

don't," rolled up to the platform in a mighty chorus.

"You're right, my boys. We don't git it. That we don't. And it's bein' took from us by sheer force, fer not one of us 'ud ever give it up of our own free will 'cept mebbe to git the petty, but nec'sary pittance thet's ben took from the well-earned six days' wages and put to the seventh. Thet's jist it, my boys. Thet w'ich we oughter git fer part of the six days' work is kep' back from us, and give only as pay fer the seventh day's work, so thet because of the scant wages fer the six days' labor we must be compelled to work on the Lord's day, w'ich I holds to be scand'lous.

"I'm 'titled to one day in ev'ry seven fer rest. But I don't git it, do I? Then somebuddy's a-robbin' me and keeps me out of my rest time. Who is it? Who's the thief thet's stole my rest day?

"So we's robbed. Robbed of our rightful wages, robbed of our rightful weekly day of rest. And who's a-robbin' me and you? We's not a-robbin' each other, is we? Oh! no, my boys. Thet's clare enough, I reckon, without

further spec'fications. You know who 'tis, and I know.

"Just wages and Sunday rest, thet's wot we want. And it's our right, and our due. But let's first go and request thet our rights be respicted; but if they won't hear us then let's up and strike, and strike good and hard, and all together, too; but peace'ble, peace'ble, mind you; not a rippin', and a tearin', and a snortin', and a burnin'. Now's the time. Let's be up and a doin'!"

Amid great cheering and shouting the speaker resumed his seat until the excitement had spent itself. Then he arose and suggested that a committee be appointed to present at once their grievances, and their request for just wages and Sunday rest, to the proprietors of all the mills and factories in the place. The committee, of which Mr. Updick was made chairman, was appointed as suggested, and the meeting adjourned in confusion with enthusiastic cheers for Billy Updy and the singing of songs as the men noisily left the room.

CHAPTER IV

The Strike Is On

The request presented by the committee of workingmen was refused, their demand scorned, and their threat to strike ignored by all of the employers alike.

Great excitement prevailed among the men when this became known, and threats of violence to the property and persons of the proprietors were heard on every hand.

Meantime the committee, of which, of course, Mr. Updick was the controlling power, set about at once to organize a peaceable strike for higher wages and Sunday rest. So on the day appointed, at the noon hour, the strike was called, and all work in the mills and factories of this great manufacturing city was suspended.

The determination to stand firm was apparent on the countenances of employers and employed alike. Evidently a long stubborn fight was on, with great suffering to ensue.

And so it was. Hunger and cold and disease prepared the way for Death, who reaped a bountiful harvest. Gloom and despair settled down upon these poor people as a heavy and chilling fog.

In many of these cheerless homes, however, the gloom was lightened somewhat by Mr. Updick, who seemed to be ubiquitous, ministering as need required, now speaking a word of cheer, and encouragement, and hope; now begging bread to feed the starving; now paying from his own meagre savings the rent of some family about to be evicted; now infusing among the despairing a spirit of determination and enthusiasm in the cause they had espoused; or restraining the disorderly from violence. Many were the women who blessed him; many were the children who clung to him, and loved him as a father; many were the men who were ready to follow him even to death, if need be.

So the days dragged along into weeks, the suffering becoming more intense all the while. But advance is made by way of suffering and death.

CHAPTER V

Mr. Poofer Appears upon the Scene

One of the young workingmen, by name James Poofer, became the lieutenant, or secretary, as you please to call him, of the labor leader, William Updick. The two men were as devoted to each other as father and son, and right well pleased, people said, would the young man's mother have been to have married Mr. Updick. She was a widow, past her prime indeed, yet still rather good-looking, and as plump as the far-famed fat-and-forty widow. But as much as she would have liked to become the wife of Mr. Updick, that worthy man, while not averse to making frequent, and often lengthy, calls at her humble home, yet for some reason best known to himself, stopped just short of "popping the question."

Mrs. Poofer and her son, who had got along right comfortably together, though each might have been more faithful in duty toward

the other, occupied three small rooms on the third floor of an old house in the Court, whose steps creaked and cracked in an alarming manner under the frequent heavy tread of William Updick.

Mrs. Poofer took in washing, and James worked in the mill under Mr. Updick, who had given him the job, though the boy was only seventeen and rather young for the place, when his father died; and should have been earning more than three dollars a week, which he was getting as an errand boy in a store.

The boy's father and Mr. Updick had been friends from boyhood; and it has been said, though with what truth we are unable to state, that on his death-bed, as on several occasions before, Mr. Poofer had commended his wife and son to his friend, hoping and expecting, it was believed, that after his death Mr. Updick would become the husband of his widow and the father of his only child. Indeed, many a day had been fixed and all arrangements made for the wedding by kindly disposed neighbors and friends, but the appointed days came and passed without the

marriage ceremony and wedding feast, to the chagrin of these would-be prophets.

Unlike mother and son in disposition and temperament, Mr. Updick had nevertheless a warm attachment, or rather a strong affection, for both; and they were both devotedly attached to him, as we have said. Mr. Updick, therefore, quite naturally became the chief adviser of the widow and her son, to whom the young man looked up with perfect confidence, always respectfully listening to his admonitions and advice, even if he did not heed them; and the widow was prone to sigh in his presence.

CHAPTER VI

Mr. Poofer Meets Miss Cunster

Mr. Cunster, a man of some influence among the workingmen, was foreman of a "gang" in another mill from that in which William Updick was employed, but both men were deeply interested in the success of the strike. Hence it came about that Mr. Poofer was frequently sent by his chief to Mr. Cunster on business pertaining to the labor troubles; and it was during one of these business calls that he first met Miss Vermilia Cunster, a young woman at least five years his senior, who merrily flitted into the room, quite by mistake of course, and to her confusion, quite naturally, and who, after introduction and greeting, flitted out of the room singing blithely a snatch of a popular love ditty.

Now Miss Cunster certainly could not be called beautiful, neither by actual vision, nor yet by any stretch or freak of the imagination, for she was tall, slender, angular in

form, with irregular features, and coarse skin. Her hair was sorrel in color, "deep auburn," she called it—and she vainly strove to curl it and adorn it with bows of ribbon of the fieriest red. It would seem, then, that Miss Cunster had little personal beauty to boast of, though she thought she had considerable, and primped and crinkeled before the glass as a belle of the boulevard might do. But if she had little personal beauty to boast of, neither had she beauty of character or disposition to offset her lack of personal charms. She was of stubborn will, of blazing passions, of fiery temper, of caustic tongue.

Certain it is that Mr. Poofer was not attracted by this feminine vision at first sight, neither at the second, nor third. But as he was sent repeatedly upon errands to her father, and he saw the young woman each time he called—for by some strange chance she always met him at the door, or on the sidewalk near her home, always quite unexpectedly, of course—his feeling of repulsion gradually faded away beneath her hearty greetings and tender smiles.

And Miss Cunster! With her it was

nothing less than love at first sight, and she confided to one of her very few friends. And this is not at all to be wondered at, for Mr. Poofer was in appearance just the man to charm the eye of any young woman. So far, indeed, did Miss Cunster fall in love with the young and handsome Mr. Poofer that he was continually in her thoughts, and she pined for him to such an extent that appetite failed, and sleep fled, and nerves jangled, and she became thinner, and paler, and more irritable, and really was in quite a bad way.

Soon after the first appearance of Mr. Poofer at her home, Miss Cunster began to take her exercise out of doors every day, morning and afternoon, for half an hour, confining her walk, strangely enough, from the second corner above her home to the corner below. But why did she so limit the distance of her excursions? The neighbors, much inclined to curious prying and gossip, were greatly perplexed. Indeed, Miss Probenster said to her bosom friend, Miss Nolling, that for the life of her she couldn't tell what had come over that Cunster gal, she was acting so queer of late, walking up and

down, up and down the penniment by the half hour at a time, for she herself timed her more than onct by the clock on the factory tower, and she verily believed that she must have falling spells, or some like, and was afeered to go far from home. And this finally came to be the commonly accepted theory in the neighborhood, so that the health of the young woman was frequently inquired after by curious neighbors and friends.

So matters went on for some days, when one morning Mr. Poofer was quite surprised to receive a note addressed to himself in a great, sprawling, awkward style of handwriting; and still more surprised when he opened it, and read its contents: "Would dear Mr. Poofer have the goodness to call the following evening upon Miss Cunster, at 222 Brandywine Street, for a social chat, if it would not put him out."

At first the young man was disposed to show the note to his mother and Mr. Updick, and make sport of it; but on second thought he put it in his pocket and determined to accept the invitation for the fun of it, and so he said nothing to anyone about it.

CHAPTER VII

Mr. Poofer Spends the Evening with Miss Cunster

Mr. Poofer, having determined to accept the invitation of Miss Cunster, and having prinked for half an hour or more before his diminutive and broken mirror, appeared at the door of that young lady's home attired in his best, which was not fine, but decent. And Miss Cunster in a red merino dress, her best, of course, with red ribbons, her hair done up with elaborate care and adorned with a huge bow of red ribbon on top of her head, which matched neither dress, neck ribbons, nor hair, awaited his coming in the little, stuffy room, politely called the parlor, but which was in reality the family sitting-room.

For a full hour she had been impatiently awaiting the coming of her visitor, with fears arising continually in her breast lest he might disappoint her. When at last his knock was heard, her heart gave a great bound, and

thumped, thumped, thumped within her bosom as she hastened to the door.

"Oh! Mr. Poofer," she said as she grasped and held his hand, and looked fondly into his eyes, "I'm so glad to see you. You've always come on bus'ness with my father. I'm real glad you've come now to see *me*." Then releasing his hand, and motioning him to a chair, she continued, "Now do set down. No, not on that cheer. Here on the sofy. It's more comfor'able." And she sat down on the sofa beside him.

What an evening they had together—an evening of bliss to the young woman, but of intense amusement to the young man! She talked. Oh! how she talked! Did ever before a tongue rattle on like hers that evening, wiggle-waggling like a rattle in the hands of a nursemaid? She laughed! Oh! how she laughed! How light-hearted and gay she seemed! She played on the piano, and the old worn-out instrument that had once belonged to her grandma Froddy and had come down to her in regular line of succession, squeaked and groaned under her rough and unsympathetic touch. And she sang, too,

popular songs, tender ballads, love ditties, rendering them in rasping tones, which became veritable screeches on the high notes. How affected she was, mincing about the room, squinting at the young man, and assuming other arts of affectation as well!

When the evening had passed and Mr. Poofer rose to leave, his would-be charmer became yet more effusive, squeezing the hand which he extended to her as he bade her good-night, and urging him by word and by look to come very soon again, smiling upon him all the while with insinuating sweetness.

Once outside, and the door closed, the young man could no longer restrain his mirth, but burst into loud laughter, which was prolonged and repeated at frequent intervals during his homeward walk, and which troubled Miss Cunster, who heard the first guffaw before he had left the steps; astonished belated pedestrians; and brought curious men and women from their beds to their windows to learn the occasion of such unseemly hilarity. His laughter, too, caused him narrowly to escape the lock-up as a policeman of recent appointment regarded him as a

hilarious imbiber of the cup that inebriates, and as a disturber of the peace, though really that neighborhood was anything but peaceful at that time of the night. Mr. Poofer arrived safely at home, however, well on toward midnight.

It was twelve o'clock when he retired to his bed—not, however, to sleep, for he went over and over again mentally the shifting scenes of his evening's entertainment amid frequent explosions of mirth. And Mrs. Boveen, whose room was under that of the young man, said afterward that she could stand in the prisence of Jedge McCoort and tek her oath thet thet wild Poofer boy was on a spree thet night, and come home dhrunk as a loon, and kep' her and her children awake ha'f the night, and them in great fright, too, by his dhrunken laffs. And Mr. Maybeer, another lodger in the house, said if he could a got thet brat of a boy thet night he'd a beat him ha'f out of his life, thet he would, a horse-laffin' thet away most o' the night. And his poor mother, ignorant of the cause of this boisterous mirth, was in a panic of fear lest her son were in a high fever and delirious, or,

worse, were suffering from an acute attack of delirium tremens. She went into his room, and sat by his bedside entreating him to tell her what ailed him, and would not go until, after assuring her repeatedly that he was all right, only amused, he gently forced her from the room and locked the door, leaving her in a perplexed state of mind long after he had fallen asleep, and indeed until he arose in the morning apparently sane and sound.

CHAPTER VIII

Mr. Updick Gives Some Practical Advice

True to his purpose, Mr. Poofer did call again upon Miss Cunster several evenings later, but not until he had received another note from that young lady expressing her concern at his apparent neglect of her, and with the urgent request that he would call that very evening, or the next.

As he entered the stuffy little parlor, reeking with odors of onions and sauerkraut, he was quietly greeted by Miss Cunster, and was at once struck by her changed demeanor. From the effusive, chattering, affected miss of a few evenings before, he found a sober, pensive, demure young woman, who talked much, indeed, but not so excitedly and ramblingly as on the former occasion, and afforded him more time and opportunity to engage in the conversation, while she directed occasional piercing glances at him to see how he was coming on. And he did come on beautifully.

There was not so much cause for amusement this time, Miss Cunster being more quiet and sensible, and really he spent rather a pleasant evening. So he called again and again, each time noticing less and less her unattractiveness of face and form, her eccentricities in dress and manner, her falseness in disposition and character. Gradually he came to be somewhat interested in her; and "interest," like pity, is akin to love.

He determined, however, to keep his feelings locked up within his own bosom, and his visits from being known; but they could not be hid from the lynx-eyed scrutiny of Mr. Updick, who knew what was going on even before the young man's mother had any idea of it, and some time, too, before it came to his ears, which it did after a while, for, to be sure, the young lady concerned could not keep secret Mr. Poofer's attention to her; nor, indeed, had she any desire to do so, for she told every one of her companions, and made the most of it, you may be sure, hinting of courtship and even of marriage in the not distant future. So that her engagement soon became the common gossip of the neighborhood.

Thus was Mr. Poofer led on, becoming so entangled, and involuntarily, too, that as an honorable man, desiring the good name of his fellow-men, it would have been difficult for him to disentangle himself from the web so cunningly woven about him, without injury to his reputation.

One evening, when matters were nearing a crisis, Mr. Updick asked his young friend to call at his room and spend the evening with him. Many an evening had they spent there together, and delightfully, too, for they loved each other; but they had been very seldom together of late, for business growing out of the strike occupied much of the time and attention of the older man; and many of the young man's evenings were spent with Miss Vermilia Cunster, "Miss Vermy," as he now called her.

"Now, Jack, my boy," said William Updick when they were seated in his room by the open window, for the weather was warm. "Now, Jack, my boy,"—for Jack was his pet name for his young friend, that being his father's name,—"you're in danger. Be cautious. Look off and out, afore and aft.

Be sure you're right afore you puts on a head of steam and starts off. Many's the worry thet comes of a hurry.

"You're a thinkin' of marryin', Jack. Now stop. Don't deny it. It's no use. And you're thinkin' of marryin' thet Banister, or Canister gal, or whatever's 'er name"—and well enough he knew, of course. "No, you can't deny it, Jack. It's no use a tryin'. It's writ on your face. Own up to it like a man."

"I haven't ast her yet, and I'm far from it. I may never marry at all," quickly and tartly replied the young man.

"Pshaw! my boy. Well, I hopes 'twon't be thet Canister gal, thet's all. And she's got red hair. Leastways it's red if my eyes ain't deceivin' me, as they's never done yit. Mebbe you calls it auburn. I don't. There now. Ast any railroader and he'll tell you mighty quick thet red's the danger signal. Look sharp w'en you sees it, and go slow and cautious like. Onless looks's mighty deceivin', she's not the one fer you, Jack, hows'ever she may do fer another. I ain't a sayin' nothin' 'bout thet. I'm consarned fer you, fer you knows I loves you, dear boy, as I loved your

father afore you, and as though you was my werry own son. And so I says to you, look well to the peg afore you hangs up your hat. All women's angels, I've heerd; but they's two sorts of angels, and mebbe thet's w'y they's all angels. All women's good, too, but some's good fer nothin', ain't they? Now I'm a speakin' in gen'ral, not in partickler. Mark thet, Jimmy Poofer. Miss Cunster," —ah! then he did know her name,—"Miss Cunster may be all right—all right fer somebuddy else, but not fer you, my boy. You're far too good fer sich's her.

"Life's flavored werry much, I s'pose, by the choice of a wife, though I ain't never tried it. So don't go and git a acid or sour flavor in yours. If she's a spider, look out fer the web or you'll be ketched. If she's a wasp, then hands off, keep your distance, or you'll git stinged. If she's a rose, though I'm 'clined to b'lieve she's anythink else, then look out fer the thorns, or you'll git jagged."

"But I ain't said I was a goin' to marry her, did I?" rather angrily replied the young man. "Far from it. I'm only payin' friendly visits. Is there harm in that? Say, is there

harm in that? All this about spiders, and wasps, and roses is nonsense, and nothin' but nonsense."

"Oh! no; not nonsense, my boy. They's no nonsense about 'em. They's bus'ness ev'ry one on 'em. Wasps, and roses, and spiders, too, may all hev their uses, and ev'ry one on 'em has, to be sure, else why's they here? But they may be set's warnin's well 's 'tractions, I reckon.

"And now a word as to the fambly, and fambly connections. Some mothers-in-laws's like high explosives. You've got to be keerful, and bring no fire nigh. But I ain't sayin,' mind you, thet they's all sich, nor all a bad, quarrelsome lot neither. Oh! no, not by no means. Certainly not. I've knowed many a good un. And they's fathers-in-law bad, too. Some's cross-grained's any log I've ever sawed, and many's the log I've sawed, I can tell you. And they's uncles, and aunts, and cousins to be took into 'count, fer like's not they'll be a runnin' in fer breakfast, dinner, and supper, and atween times, and a-comin' with their childrens, bag and baggage, to spend the night, and p'rhaps longer. Extend

your prospec'. Take 'em all in in your view. If you don't want 'em about, mayhap your wife will. And then wot?

"So you're tired of an old man's adwice"—as the young man rose to his feet and took up his hat. "Well, if you will go, my boy, though I wish you'd stay a deal longer, good-night, and keep your wits."

CHAPTER IX

CAUGHT

"Jimmy, dear," said Miss Cunster in her most bewitching manner to Mr. Poofer one evening as they sat together on a bench in the park, the moon shining upon them in silvery splendor, quickening the impulse of love,—"Jimmy, dear, we've been goin' together so long now that people's beginnin' to talk about us. Why, what do you think? Miss Dencher told ma we seemed to be very 'fectionate, me and you, and she s'posed we'd be married afore many days, judgin' leastways from appearances; and old Mrs. Bowser said she thought it about time we was married, we appeared so lovin'. And,—and,—do you know, Jimmy, dear; well,—well," and she turned her head away in her modesty,—"I, —well, I think so, too."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Poofer, astonished at such a plain declaration as this. "What! You think so, too!"

"And why not, Jimmy, dear? But la me! what hev I said? What hev I said?" and she leaned her head upon his shoulder and wept.

There was nothing, of course, for the young man to do, under the circumstances, but to comfort her; and this he did in his way, which, however, was not at all to her liking, for he blunderingly referred to their long friendship of several weeks' duration, spoke of their pleasant intercourse, and declared he had neither desire nor intention of sundering the ties of friendship which bound them together, and which he valued so highly.

How stupid he was to be sure, or tantalizing, which is worse! Why didn't he come to the point and speak out like a man? So, naturally enough, the young woman wept on, and would not be so comforted.

"But, Jimmy, dear," she sobbed, "I've my feelin's in this matter, and they's hurt. They's hurt awful bad, awful bad."

"Well, what can I do to mend them, deary?" he replied, evidently softened and subdued.

"Call me your deary. Make it personal

and make it possessive. There! There! Oh! what hev I gone and said? Dear me!" and she sobbed and sighed upon his shoulder.

"But I couldn't call you that," he replied, evidently recalling from long ago the meaning of personal and of possessive, "unless you were my wife, deary, and you're not that, you know."

"No, not yet," she sobbed; "not yet. But oh! my, I might be. Ah, me!" and she wept, shedding tears copiously.

Now what could the young man do? One of two things. And he did one of them. Raising her head from his shoulder, and pushing back the red locks from her forehead, he imprinted a kiss upon her brow, and another upon her lips, and simply asked, "Will you be mine now?"

What magic charm in those few simple words! By the utterance of them the sighing, and weeping and dejection of the young woman were transformed into ecstasies of joy and hope, which found expression in demonstrative exclamations of, "I will! Yes, I will! Yes, to be sure I will!" with hugs and kisses as accompaniments. So demonstrative, in-

deed, did she become that the policeman passing along put her and the young man both under arrest for making love in the park, and let them off only when they reached the gate and solemnly promised to conduct themselves thereafter with more decorum in public places.

So Mr. Poofer and Miss Cunster were engaged. The trap, long set, had sprung at last, and the victim was caught.

The young woman was radiantly and triumphantly happy—happy in her own way, which, however, was anything but agreeable in her home. And the young man, far from being radiantly happy, was just the reverse, being quite despondent, irritable, and cross. He tried to keep his engagement secret, and, depending upon him only, it might have remained concealed for days and weeks. But there was another and more deeply interested party to the engagement, who had neither the self-control nor inclination to keep the secret, and so the news spread like wild-fire through the neighborhood.

The very next morning after the betrothal, bright and early, Miss Vermilia, overstepping

all the antipathies that separated the Street from the Court, fairly ran down to Mrs. Poofer's in the exuberance of her new-found joy, and up the stairs, all out of breath as she entered the apartment of her prospective mother-in-law to announce the engagement.

Mrs. Poofer had received no intelligence of any alliance between the house of Poofer and the house of Cunster, nor would she believe that such an alliance had been formed, and now awaited only the formal ratification or consummation. Even upon the most solemn and oft-repeated asservation of this representative of the house of Cunster she refused to believe—at least she professed not to believe.

"There now! Out with you! And don't you be a bringin' sech tales to me. D'ye hear? My boy, who's a Poofer on his father's side, and a Froddy on his mother's, a goin' to marry a Cunster! Oh! no! No, indeedy. It's nonsense. More, it's a lie. There now, Vermy Cunster, take that and go. It's a lie, and I'll have no liars in my 'partments, humble's they is, I can tell you. Now be off."

And the worthy representative of the Cun-

ster family, firing a volley of vituperation at Mrs. Poofer, flounced out of the room in a rage, and was off to bear the tidings elsewhere.

And Mr. Poofer! How he was questioned, and cross-questioned, upon his return home at noon! But he was uncommunicative and quite low-spirited. So while Miss Cunster persistently circulated the intelligence of her engagement to Mr. Poofer, the mother of that young man as persistently denied it in toto. And the neighbors believed whom they would.

The news, however, was not long in reaching the ears of Mr. Updick.

"Now, Jack, my boy," he said to the young man one evening as he pulled up a chair to the table in the kitchen and partook of the frugal meal with the widow and her son, "you're a goin' to marry. No, madam, it's too true," as Mrs. Poofer entered a vigorous protest, followed by a no less vigorous tirade against that "red-headed hussy," as she called Vermilia.

"Out with the truth, Jack, afore your mother like a man. Tell the truth, the hull

truth, and nothin' but the truth, as says jedge and jury in a court of honor. Out with it, boy."

"Well, I'll not deny it," said the young man. "I reckon it's all done and fixed, and nothin' needed but the cer'mony to make it complete."

At this plain statement Mrs. Poofer rose from her chair in her wrath, and in a passion shook her fist in her son's face, and spake out boldly whatever came into her mind at the moment, which was neither elegant nor decorous, while both of the men sat and listened in silence. It was only after she had finished and had sunk back exhausted into her chair that Mr. Updick continued.

"Now you've had your say, madam, and quite a full say, too, or I'm much mistaken. We knows your feelin's and sentimen's. You needn't go further." Then turning to his young friend, he continued, "Is your mind fully persuaded, my boy? Is it? Is she the right one fer you? Do you love 'er? Do you? If so, then William Updick's the last man to say a word, but will make the best possible on't. There now. Mebbe we

oughtn't to jedge a woman by appearances, w'ich is often deceivin'. But in this case I don't b'lieve 'tis. I trow her and her looks's one and the same. She's wot she looks, and she looks wot she is. Would you be tied to a crab-tree, my boy? Well, I'd rather it 'ud be you than me, fer I prefers sweets to sours. It's easy to marry, Jack,"—"Ah! me," sighed the widow,—"but the hard times may come after. Look well to your footoor. Now all this I says, my boy, fer your own good. The cer'mony's not yit said; and if you're not perfectly satisfied with your choice and feels thet you've made a mistake as your looks seems to indercate, w'y up and out with the truth to her, and seek release. It'll be werry hard, I'm a thinkin', to git it, but if she finds you don't care fer her, if they's a grain of sense in 'er, she'll let you go double-quick. Now I'm not a interferin', mind, but only a talkin' as your poor father 'ud a done if he was here to-night."

"Well, I'll own up right here to you and Mom," replied the young man, "I don't love her. I've made a mistake. I was a fool. But I've done gone and ast her, and I'll not

draw back—no, not if I was to be shot fer it. And I wisht I was!" and he sighed, and leaned his head on his hands with a look of abject despair, and yet of grim determination.

"Better not tie the gallin' knot than be tied by it fer life, my boy. Better retire hon'rably while you may, than dishon'rably it may be by gittin' a diworce through the law court. But if you will, you will; and there's an end on't," said William Updick, and abruptly took his departure.

CHAPTER X

The Strikers Become Desperate

The strike continued—one, two, three weeks of it. While the owners of mills and factories were able to live in luxury during these trying times, the workingmen, having found it well-nigh impossible, even when work was plenty, to keep themselves and their families sufficiently fed and decently clad, were in dire distress, dependent, when their credit at the stores expired, upon the very meager supplies furnished them by their more fortunate neighbors.

The situation became desperate; and the strikers again demanded a conference with the employers, which, as before, met with a blunt refusal.

What could be done? The men could not hold out much longer, that was evident; and in their desperation, pillage, the destruction of property, and even bloodshed, were to be

feared. The cloud was angry-looking indeed, threatening a terrible storm of destruction, if the pent-up forces so long held in check should burst their restraining bonds. Fires were burning fiercely beneath the surface, which threatened to break forth at any moment in destroying and all-consuming fury.

The crisis had come, and who but William Updick could stay the threatened catastrophe? All eyes turned instinctively to him, and with his characteristic earnestness, boldness, and enthusiasm he threw himself, heart and soul, into the breach. He shrewdly conjectured that, while the employers would not consent to see him nor any committee of employees as appointed representatives of the dissatisfied workingmen to discuss a settlement of the strike, they could hardly refuse to see him and one or two others with him when they called unofficially at their homes. So with two of his most tactful and trusted lieutenants he called in turn at the home of every mill-owner and manufacturer in the city; and in every one of them, with only one exception, he and his companions were admitted, received politely, if not cordially, and their recital of

their grievances listened to with considerable attention and patience.

As might be expected, William Updick was the spokesman on these occasions, those who accompanied him merely assenting to his remarks, or supplementing them.

"Good evenin' to you, sir," says Mr. Updick. "It's a good evenin' but it's dark days we's a havin' now. 'Twould make your heart ache to see how our poor people's a livin' these days with no flour in the bar'l, no oil in the lamp, no food in the cupboard, no coal in the cellar, no money in the purse; with the childrens a cryin' fer bread of w'ich there ain't none; fer shoes and clothes to keep out the cold and none to give 'em; men beat down with worry and care; and the women a cryin' their eyes out at the sad plight of theirselves and their famblies. 'Twould melt your heart to see 'em, sir, as I sees 'em ev'ry day. Come down among us, and see fer yourself. These's tryin' times, sir.

"No, sir; I don't say's all our men's saints and angels. Oh! no, indeed. To be sure not. Some of 'em's bad and a goin' to the bad's fast's they ken. But they'd not be so bad,

some of 'em, if they'd work. Idleness and vice goes hand in hand. Idleness raises the devil. But it's a deal easier to raise the devil than to lay him on the flat of his back, ain't it, sir? An idle man's easy tempted and led astray.

"Oh! no, sir; I don't say's all who works's perfect. No, indeed. Certainly not. But you knows, sir, thet work lessens evil. Work's a good moral tonic. But a tonic may be took too much of, and so become a p'ison. Work, but not overwork,'s good fer ev'ry man; and ev'ry man's all the better fer it; but too much work, I reckon's about's bad's too little, fer the men git ower tired and seek unnateral stimulants to keep 'em a goin' like, and they soon breaks down and dies, or becomes chronics.

"Yes, we wants work, and plenty of it, too, within rhyme and reason. But no Sunday work. No, sir, no Sunday work. We's not machines—we's humans. We's not all body neither—we's got souls to be looked to.

"Give us work through the week, and don't rob us of our Sunday rest. Give us fair and square wages fer six days' work.

"It's just wages and Sunday rest we wants. There now. Ain't it reason'ble? Is there any onreason'bleness in thet? If so, tell us out and open. Let's be fair and square with each other.

"Grant our humble request, sir. Open up the mill. Stop at onct this awful misery, and degradation, and sin into w'ich our poor people's come through the closin' of the mills and fact'ries. And you'll profit by it's well's we. It's of mootooal benefit.

"Now, sir, p'r'aps we've kep' you too long. We's off; and if you've any word fer our poor, starvin', sufferin' people, give it to me now, or send it's quick's you ken, fer want and despair makes men desp'rate. They's my address, sir."

Rising, and handing to the proprietor a slip of paper on which, in sprawling letters, his name and address were written, Updick bade good-evening, and with his friends departed.

Several evenings were spent in this way, while during the days the labor leader went about from one to another of the more excitable, radical, and desperate strikers caution-

ing them against violence, and urging them to hold out until a general meeting of the men should be called, when it was hoped word would be received from the employers as to whether or not they would recede from their position, and accede to the strikers' demands for just wages and Sunday rest.

CHAPTER XI

The Meeting of the Strikers

The meeting was fixed for a Saturday evening, and the notice of time and place quickly circulated among the workingmen. At the time appointed the hall, capable of holding fifteen hundred persons, was packed almost to suffocation with an excited, desperate crowd of men, which a word would have transformed into a raving mob bent upon destruction.

Hundreds, unable to gain admission to the hall, gathered on a vacant lot opposite and held an impromptu meeting.

William Updick, by common consent the leader of the strikers, came to the meeting that evening deeply impressed with a sense of his responsibility, realizing full well the critical situation, and his own insufficiency, yet calm, courageous, self-possessed.

As he approached the hall some of the men on the lot spied him, and shouted:

"Here's Billy Updy. Three cheers, boys,

for Billy Updy!" And the cheers were given with a will, while a box was brought, and Mr. Updick was escorted to it, and three more rousing cheers were given as he mounted the improvised platform.

"My boys," he said, as soon as he could be heard, "we's fallen on hard times—hard luck, I've heerd some of you call it, and mebbe 'tis to your way of thinkin'; but not mine, fer I'm no b'liever in luck, good nor bad. But these's hard times, as we'll all agree on. But how's they to be made better? Thet's wot we've got to consider. And we must up and put on our thinkin' caps, and instanter, too.

"I've heerd, and I knows you boys well 'nough to b'lieve it too, thet they's some of you thet's fer a risin' up in your dignity and a puttin' fire to fact'ry and mill, and a burnin' 'em all down to dust and ashes. Like me w'en a young man and gits upon my dignity and goes off and kills my boss's ket, because he wouldn't raise my wages. And w'ot I gained by thet proceedin' I've never yit diskivered.

"Spite's like a mean bunnit on a fine-lookin' woman, werry ugly and werry onbecomin'."

"We's no women to wear bunnits," someone cried out, and a general laugh followed.

"Well, mebbe you's not a good-lookin' woman, to wear a bunnit. I'll not deny it. But mebbe you's like some women, to put on more'n you oughter. And as to your good looks, I ain't a sayin' nothin' about 'em. Oh! no, nothin' at all."

Laughter and applause followed this quick retort, and when the noise subsided, he continued:

"Now don't be rash, my boys. Don't lose your wits. Keep your heads cool, and your brains won't sizzle. Stop! Look! Listen! Them's three good railroad words, as I've seen many's the time; and good they's, too, w'en they's danger about. And they's three good words fer us, too, in these dang'rous times. Stop short. Look out. Listen to reason and oncommon sense. There 'tis in a pea-hull. And good-night to one and all."

At the conclusion of his remarks, which were received with vociferous cheers and applause, their leader presented one of his most cautious, tactful, and experienced helpers, a

man well-known and respected by the men, as chairman of the out-of-door meeting, who was loudly cheered as he took his place on the box which served as a platform.

This done, Mr. Updick hurried to the hall where the men awaited impatiently his coming. With difficulty he made his way to the platform, where he was greeted with shouts, and cheers, and loud demonstrations of regard. Bowing and smiling, he took the chair left unoccupied for him, and looked out over the turbulent mass of men, who were swinging their arms, and waving their hats, and crying, "Down with the bosses! Burn the mills! Pull down the factories!" and mingling their cries with blood-curdling oaths and curses.

For a moment or two, until he could gain complete mastery of himself, and breathe a prayer, for he was a praying man, the leader sat motionless; and then slowly rising to his feet, his face pale, his lips slightly quivering, his limbs a-tremble, he lifted his hand. And there were cries all over the hall of, "Silence! Billy Updy! Silence, there! Billy Updy's goin' to speak! Silence!"

It was not long before comparative quiet was restored. The interest developed as the speaker proceeded, until toward the close of his speech the famous pin, if dropped, might almost have been heard.

The speaker began in a husky voice, which grew clearer and stronger as he proceeded.

"You calls me Billy Updy; and I ain't a objectin' to thet. I calls you my boys, and you'll not object to thet, will you?"

Cries of, "No! No! We're your boys all right, as you ain't got none of yer own," was the apt response.

"Now listen to me, fer I've got somethin' to say to you to-night, and I'm a goin' to talk werry plain, too."

Cries of, "All right! We'll listen. Chip in, old man," interrupted him.

"I'm 'shamed 'nough of some of you the way you's ben a carryin' on, a usin' up the little money you oughter've bought bread, and shoes, and clothes, and coal with fer your famblies, in drink, and gamblin' and a carousin' round."

"Go on! Go on! Give it to 'em! Give

it to 'em hot and heavy," was heard on all sides.

"And you, too," a quick retort which "brought down the house."

"Yes, you're no better than the rest, mebbe. I don't know, I'm sure. And I guess they's a bad streak in all of us, w'en it comes to thet. But some's worse'n others. And you who's gambled and drinked up your money, w'ot's you got to show fer it? Well, some of you's I ken see's got red noses and pale faces, and I guess your women and children's got nothin' to eat, and little 'nough to wear this cool weather. God pity 'em, if you don't. God help 'em, if you won't.

"I'm temp'rance; and I ain't got no right to be nothin' else. But I wasn't alus temp'rance. I uster love my grog; but if I loved it, it hated me, and brought me down low 'nough, I ken tell you. And it hates ev'ry one of us. The more you loves it, the worse it'll treat you. Thet's my experience. There now. Wot's yours?"

"Right you are. Yes! That's right. It's true. I'm with you there, Billy Updy. Go it, old feller. Give it to 'em. You're on the

right track," was the response from men here and there all over the hall.

"If you gits the best of whiskey it'll git the best of you. Mebbe some of you's tried to drown your troubles in beer and grog, but you's found they could swim, haven't you?

"I've heerd it said thet ardent sperits's evil sperits. And I'm agreed, and go further and says they's unclean, filthy sperits, too, as your wives'll tell you mighty quick, if you'll ast 'em.

"Your purse shrinks w'en you drinks, and nothin' good to show fer it neither.

> "Drink! Drink! this terrible drink,
> A causin' more trouble than any ken think.
> Drink! Drink! these horrible stuffs,
> Made by the devil, and drinked by the toughs.'

"Hooray! Billy Updy's dropped into po'try. It's all right, Billy Updy. Give it to us in verse. Hooray!"

"And as to gamblin', boys, don't do it. Don't do it. Be fair and square in all your dealin's with one another. Give valey fer valey received. A gambler's a sneak, a whippin' off other people's money, and a givin' nothin' in return. A man's gits money

a gamblin' gits it neither's a gift nor wages. How then does he git it? By stealin'. Thet's the way he gits it. Gamblin's stealin'. Thet's wot gamblin' is, it's stealin'. If you don't want to be a thief then don't go a gamblin'. So I says the best throw of the dice's to throw 'em away.

"Now if you'd ben better boys I guess more could a ben done fer you. But ain't the bosses right w'en they says you can't be so werry bad off w'en you ken spend so much in the saloon and other evil places; and w'en they's prejudiced ag'inst you w'en you gits drunk and acts the fool? And we who don't drink and carry on must suffer through your fault. Is 't fair to us? Can't you deny yourselves these evil thin's fer the good of us all?

"Now you's got my first point. We's got faults of our own to kerrect. We's not all saints nor angels; nor's the bosses all devils. D'ye hear? Let's be fair and square.

"But here's my second point. Our bosses's got faults, too. But we mustn't go at 'em and butt 'em out of 'em like my billy-goat I uster hev w'en I was a little chap and a carryin'

a pail of milk butt me, and threw me down, and spilt my milk, and made me hoppin' mad, so's I ups and offs a yellin' to Mom fer dear life, and the milk was gone, and I was mad, and Mom was mad, and she gits the cart whip and gives the billy a standin' innercent like in a fence corner a good old-fashion' whippin', and he gits mad, and butts, and ups and offs, and away."

All through the recital of this bit of history there was laughter, which grew louder as the speaker proceeded in the graphic portrayal of the scene, until the whole mass of men were convulsed, and shouted, and clapped, and stamped until the old building threatened to collapse.

"Yes, the goat he got mad," continued the speaker as soon as he could be heard. "And I was mad; and Mom, too, I can tell you. And I felt her mad. And the milk was all gone. And the goat was a careerin' round's mad's them hornets in the old garden uster be w'en I wants to play with 'em. So nothin' was gained by the billy a buttin' me, was there? Now don't let's play the billy-goat, act the fool, destroy proppity, make the bosses mad,

and git nothin' in return, but mebbe the pententi'ry. Don't let's play the fool, I say. Let's be manly, firm, determined in our demand, w'ich's right not only accordin' to our jedgment, but in the jedgment of the decent and thinkin' public. Let's be gentlemen, ev'ry one of us, and act like gentlemen, not a provokin' anger and so a goin' 'gainst our own int'rests. I charge you, my boys, to restrain your tempers. Don't be like a woman I knowed onct who'd a short temper and a long tongue, and they most allus goes together. Well, this woman wouldn't keep in her temper fer nothin'. And she ups one evenin' w'en I was callin' and slashes into her beloved husband right and left."

"That's the way they does," piped a thin voice in the audience, and the whole assembly was in an uproar of laughter.

" 'Well,' he says, 'Jinnie, I was a comin' to a conclusion if you'd a let me finish, and the werry conclusion was to give you money fer a new bunnit; but now you don't git none.' And she didn't git wot she wanted 'cause she couldn't hold in her temper. If you must hev a sharp tongue, hold it in your mouth. They's

the place fer it. Don't let it pertrude. Don't rile these men, and it don't take much from us to do it, neither.

"They won't take talk nor temper from us, but they'll take a great deal more—our just wages and our rest day. Now we wants to act the gentleman, and not the rowdy, and try to make honest men of 'em. And we can't make 'em honest by a burnin' down their mills, nor a blowin' up their fact'ries. Thet ain't the way to teach honesty, is it? Oh! no, thet won't do it. It'll only make 'em more sot in their evil ways, and rouse up their ill-will, and we'll suffer awful by it. Thet we will. And the public'll be down on us, and say as how we oughter be beat. Git the public ag'in you and where be you at? Now the public's with us, and agin the bosses. Keep it so. And sooner or later the bosses'll hev to give in to our reason'ble demands."

"But," cried some one, "we can't wait. We're out of bread. We must do somethin'. Settle it now." And immediately there was an uproar. The speaker for the moment lost control of his audience. But clapping his hands, and then stretching out his arms

toward the men, silence was soon restored, and he proceeded.

"Don't I know it, my boys? Don't I know it? Many of you's had little to eat to-day, and fer many a day, fer the matter of thet, and so've I. I'm one with you there. I know wot 'tis to be hungry. It's pinchin' times we's all a havin'. But who'll say it'll be any better if we go a careerin' round, a burnin' and a tearin' down, and a actin' fit fer the pen'ten-ti'ry? We ain't a goin' to git w'ot we want thet a way. And we ain't a goin to git it by a givin' up and a goin' back to old wages and seven days' work neither. We'll only git it by a denyin' ourselves a bit longer, and a pinchin' a bit harder, though, dear knows, it's hard 'nough now.

"But I looks a little ways into the footoor, my boys, and I sees the bosses a yieldin' to public opinion, accedin' to our just demands, and we at work ag'in, a happy, prosp'rous, contented people; the childrens, God bless 'em, well-dressed, well-fed, a goin' off to school; the women well-kep', and happy; and we men sat'sfied, and a doin' right by our bosses as they does right by us. And our

condition's improved, our surroundin's more neat and healthy, our morals on a higher plane.

"It's a outlook into the footoor, but it's the near footoor—a few days more of sufferin,' then peace, and plenty, and happiness. There! Can't you see it? Now——" He stopped abruptly, for there was much crowding, and pushing, and noise about the door.

CHAPTER XII

Mr. Finby Appears

There were cries from the rear of the room, "Make way! Make way! It's Mr. Finby, the boss! Give him a chanct! Git out, will ye! Let him through! Let's hear what he's got to say!" They made their way for the visitor as best they could, being so crowded together.

It was a tall, portly gentleman, who jostled and pushed along was trying to make his way from the door to the platform at the farther end of the hall. Fists were shaken in his face, and angry threats, and jeers, and taunts greeted him as he slowly proceeded up the aisle; but he was unharmed, for Mr. Updick had called aloud:

"Let Mr. Finby come up here and speak to us. Mebbe he's got good news. I b'lieve he has."

So, puffing and blowing, flushed and heated, the visitor finally reached the plat-

form, up the steep steps of which he stumbled, being crowded and pushed from behind by those who would accelerate his speed. And so breathless and panting from his unusual and vigorous exertion, he stood beside the leader, presenting quite a contrast to him both in appearance and manner.

"Glad we are to see you with us, Mr. Finby. And I hopes you've got somethin' right good to tell us. Now we'll all listen right attentive to w'ot you've got to say, won't we, boys?"

"Aye! Aye! That we will. That's right, Billy Updy. Fair play! Let him gas, and we'll meter him. Go on! Go on! Hi! Mr. Finby, up and off. Let off steam. Hi! there, go on! Go on!" came from hoarse voices in the crowd below.

"So, Mr. Finby," said Mr. Updick aside while the uproar continued, "you see they's all anxious and a waitin'. You'll speak to 'em, won't you, and give 'em some good news, too, sech's you've agreed to our just request fer fair wages and Sunday rest?"

So Mr. Finby stepped to the front of the platform as Mr. Updick said to the men,

"Now, boys. quiet. We'll hear w'ot Mr. Finby's got to say."

Silence settled instantly upon the great concourse of turbulent men, for all wondered what had brought the proprietor of one of the mills to their meeting, and curiosity was thoroughly aroused as to what he would say.

"I see before me," began Mr. Finby, "some who were in our employ, and now are not, but are without work, without means, without friends to help them. Your women and children are suffering, I doubt not. You know how it is with you. As for us, our mills and factories are closed, and we are idle, too. But we've money to live on; and when one has money, one has friends. But we are not without feeling. We are sorry for you in your distress."

Now this was a most unfortunate beginning, as the restlessness of the men and the look in their eyes plainly indicated.

Mr. Updick, in a low tone, said, "Change your tack, Mr. Finby." Mr. Finby took the hint, and continued:

"But we're not faultless, I'll admit. We could have prevented all this misery and

distress, but we wouldn't and didn't; but that is not saying we will not. We heard you were going to hold a meeting to-night, and so last evening all the proprietors of the mills and factories in this city—all except one who was out of town, but whom we feel sure is in perfect accord with us—met at my house and talked long and fully over the situation. Some, I will not deny, were for holding out; others were for yielding to your demands. But when the vote was finally taken the majority were for yielding conditionally to your demands, and the minority acquiesced."

At this point the whole assembly went wild. The men, as by a common impulse, rose from their seats and threw aloft hats and CANES regardless of where they might come down. Deafening cries and shouts and cheers made the walls fairly tremble. Some of the men laughed, some cried, some shook hands, some embraced, some became hysterical. It was a heart-touching scene which lasted until through exhaustion the men quieted down somewhat, when Mr. Updick, giving his usual signal for silence, always regarded by the men, nodded to Mr. Finby to proceed.

"Yes, we promise to grant your request for Sunday rest, and from a dollar and a quarter, to a dollar seventy-five a day, including Sunday, according to the kind of work done. But we ask this of you, that you work faithfully ten hours a day as formerly, from seven in the morning to six in the evening, with an hour at noon for dinner and rest; and overtime, when our work demands it, at the rate of from ten to twenty cents an hour extra, according to the kind of work done. Now these are the propositions I am instructed by the owners of mills and factories in this city to lay before you. Now what do you say? Are the terms agreeable?"

Before he quite finished pandemonium broke loose, and there was a repetition of the hysterical scene.

"That's all right! We're agreed! Yes! Yes! We're ready! We'll start in Monday morning! Give us a chanct! The terms's all right!"

The meeting broke up in the wildest disorder; and the men, many of them singing and shouting, returned with the good news to wives, mothers and children; while many

others crowded the neighboring saloons and groggeries to celebrate the break of the strike.

Meantime, Mr. Updick said quietly to Mr. Finby that the terms were quite agreeable, and would be complied with, and that the men would report for work on Monday morning.

So the long, stubborn strike was broken. The mighty power of aroused public opinion had asserted itself and compelled a settlement. Right and justice triumphed.

CHAPTER XIII

Mr. Updick Has Something Practical to Say

Mr. Updick was a teetotaler. He had not always been such, but for years he had not tasted a drop of intoxicating drink; and he had strong temperance convictions, too.

Naturally enough, therefore, Mr. Updick and Tom Bussley, the keeper of the most frequented saloon in the neighborhood, were opposed the one to the other. Both were powers among the workingmen, exerting considerable influence, but in opposite directions and to very different ends. The one was respected and beloved; the other, a political trickster, was feared by all, and despised by many, even of his own patrons over whom he held sway with an iron hand; and he threatened and bullied when more gentle methods failed to hold the allegiance of his customers to his political party.

During the days of idleness incident to the

strike young Mr. Poofer had become a frequenter of Bussley's saloon, and was fast falling under the spell of its proprietor. Mr. Updick was quick to notice it, and determining, if possible, to turn the young man's steps in the opposite direction, took an early opportunity to admonish him.

"Now look-a-here, my boy, I'll be plain with you, as one who loves you as I loved your father afore you; and many's the glass of grog we've took together in Meaner's tavern. But them was in the days w'en we was young and foolish like, and monstrously foolish, too, my boy. But in time we sees the evil of it, and we both ups and agrees thet we'll be teetotalers, and keep each other up to't, too. It was hard to break off, I'll not deny, fer we'd both come to love our grog and to depend on't, too; but we did break off, and it's many's the year since I touched the damning stuff—and thet's no bad word as I'm a usin' it, neither; leastways it's exact and perpetooal truth. I've gone through all the exper'ences, and I'll say fer it, it's deceivin'. It promises a good time, and w'en I takes it at its word, w'y it ups and befuddles me so's

I doesn't know w'ether I's havin' a good time or not; and then follers it up with shivers and shakes, head-ache and liver-ache, and a gen'ral mis'ry from top to toe. And the good time it promises's never yit come, onless it's to the barman, who's took in many's the nickel from me, and it done him no good neither; and I reckon he ain't had no good times neither.

"Strong drink's a liar No, I'll not call it strong drink neither. It's weak drink. Thet's w'ot it is, and nothin' else, fer it makes strong men weak and silly, don't it? It enters a man's mouth and comes out in weak and silly talk; and the nose's got to blush fer the sins of the mouth. It's water as I'll call strong drink, fer didn't Samson drink it? And it drives mills, and floats ships, and makes harvests. And w'ot can't it do? But 'toxicating liquor doubles men up and tumbles 'em over into the gutter's weak and 's helpless's a drownded ket. Keep to pure water if you'd be strong, Jack, my boy. Pure water's good inside and outside. Grog's well enough outside, but it's awful bad inside. It gives men shivers in the legs, and in the head, too;

and makes 'em see more'n they oughter, or wants to neither, fer the matter of thet. Adam's ale's better than the devil's ale ev'ry time, my boy. I'd a deal rather hev a man a workin' under me who drinks like a fish, than one who drinks like a alcohol lamp.

"W'en grog goes in sense goes out. W'y I've knowed many's the man as takes his drink as a night-cap to put him to sleep at night, and then as a eye-opener to wake him wide up w'en he gits up in the mornin'. Now w'ere's the sense in thet? So they goes to bed meller, but they gits up rotten. Thet may not strike you as fine and perlite, Jack, but ain't it true? And truth's w'ot we's after.

"W'en wine's in wit's out, and passions's up, as I've heerd tell. And a man as'll do a evil deed 'll nerve himself to 't with alcohol. The devil reaches many's the man through drink; and through drink many's the man as reaches the devil. Resist the devil, my boy, but flee from 'toxicatin' drink, and run fer your life's fast's you ken.

"It's this drink thet injures men externally, internally, and eternally. I've heerd thet, and I've remembered it, and I b'lieves ev'ry

word of it, too. Remove the mask and strip the clothes off this 'toxicatin' drink, and w'ots there? The sarpent and the adder. And we's Scripter fer't too. It's like the snake, pritty, but deadly. The snake's pritty, I'll not deny it, some of 'em leastways. But because it's pritty to look at thet's no reason w'y I should fool with it, is it? Liquor's pritty, too, I'll not say it ain't. But because 'tis thet's no reason I should make a fool of myself and play with it, and git bit and p'isoned, is it? Oh, yes; it's pritty, werry pritty—but it bites.

"I knows thet alcohol preserves dead bodies, but thet don't perwent it from destroyin' livin' bodies, and souls, too, fer the matter of thet, does it? I've heerd liquor called ardent sperits. They's ardent lovers, is they? Well, you'd better not be ardent in your 'fection fer 'em, my boy. As long's they wants you and you hasn't your 'fection set on 'em, and don't go a hankerin' arter 'em, and lets 'em alone, no harm ken come. Drink opens many's the chink in the purse. It shows up, as I've seen many's the time, the emptiness of the man's purse. And more, I've

knowed it to show up the contents of his stomick.

"No, Jack, my boy, don't drink this water of hell, and I s'pose it's about all the drink they gits down there. It'll tek all the money you git. It'll destroy your health. It'll ruin your repitation. It'll make you wretched. It'll fit you fer hell. Thet's wot it'll do fer you. Now them's werry plain words, but they's true words, ev'ry one on 'em.

"Temp'rance's the best med'cine. It perwents disease, perserves health, permotes good sperits, and makes a man comfor'able like in his own mind. Take it, my boy; and in good, big doses, too; even's much's teetotalism won't hurt you, but all the better.

"Now don't, Jack, my boy, go and throw your precious life and soul away. You's jest a startin' now. It'll be easier fer you to stop now than 'twill be a year, a month, a week from now. Ev'ry day you's a addin' to the strength of the chain thet's a bindin' you. Come, give me your word thet you'll stop the cursed drink this werry day and hour, and'll never touch it again."

The young man listened to all his friend

said apparently unmoved; and, instead of answering in words, replied in action by walking out and off to the saloon for what had now come to be his nightly dram.

CHAPTER XIV

The Improved Industrial Conditions

On the Monday morning after their meeting the men started to their work bright and early. Between employers and employees good feeling and good faith, peace and goodwill prevailed.

Unfinished work remained to be done; and rush orders, some of them large ones, too, were frequently received. The tide of prosperity rolled in, hence economic and industrial conditions rapidly improved.

The change was noticeable in the homes, which were brightened up, many of them considerably, some having new pieces of furniture, bits of cheap bric-a-brac, rugs, or lamps, with an attempt at beauty, if nothing more. More papers and cheap magazines were taken; and even a new book or two appeared on home tables here and there. The churches felt the change. Men, women, and children were now able to

wear decent clothing; and, there being no Sunday work, many availed themselves of the privilege thus afforded to attend religious services.

Even the saloons were affected by the change. The increase of wages, and the consequent brightening up of homes, and the lightening of the women's burdens, made home more attractive. So that there were not so many as formerly who patronized the saloons and other places of evil resort, though it may be said there were still all too many.

Streets and courts and alleys were improved. Old rookeries were torn down, and comfortable little houses erected on their sites. Backyards, cellars, and alley-ways underwent a cleaning up, for the residents, having something of self-respect restored, had respect unto their surroundings.

Thus Sunday rest, increase of wages, seven days' pay for six days' work, produced a great revolution in the condition of these poor people and their environment, as it always will.

CHAPTER XV

The Wedding

Time increased the opposition on the part of both families immediately concerned to the marriage of Mr. Poofer and Miss Cunster.

Mr. and Mrs. Cunster threatened, indeed, to disown their daughter should she so demean herself and disgrace their family as to marry this poor fellow so far beneath them, for did he not live in the Court?—and made her life a burden and a torture by their active opposition. And Mrs. Poofer! Well, she fretted and worried, and scolded and stormed, until her son had little peace or comfort in his home. He was forbidden to enter the Cunster dwelling by the irate master of the house himself, neither would Mrs. Poofer in any wise tolerate the young woman in her presence. Hence, the meetings of the lovers were of necessity clandestine, the bitter opposition only serving, as it usually does, to make them both more determined in their purpose to marry.

But why prolong this intolerable condition of affairs in their respective homes? Why not be married at once, and done with it? Maybe then, when further opposition would prove useless, their parents would relent and be reconciled. So, indeed, pled Miss Cunster with her betrothed, who, it must be confessed, was rather disposed to hold back and put off the nuptials indefinitely. But she persisted, and pled, and wept, until at last one evening as they sat together on a bench in the park he yielded to her importunate entreaties to fix the next evening as the time for their wedding.

Promptly at half past seven o'clock the following evening both were in the park ready to proceed to the minister's house. Mr. Poofer was, of course, arrayed for the great occasion in his very best. And the bride about to be; how shall we do justice to her toilet? Her dress, of thin material, for the weather was warm, was fiery red in color. At her neck was a red bow, but of quite a different shade from that of the dress; and the hat she wore was trimmed with red of yet another shade, which goes to show that Miss

Cunster was quite partial to red, and of all shades of red, too.

They were married. And as they came forth from the house husband and wife she looked triumphantly happy; but he, worried and crestfallen enough.

At the corner of her street they parted, he going to his home and she to hers.

The bride, quite naturally, could not keep the secret locked up in her breast, but as soon as she entered the room where her father and mother were seated, he reading the evening paper, and she darning stockings, exclaimed in breathless haste:

"Pop! Mom! I'm married. Married to Jimmy Poofer this very hour. There now! What are you a goin' to do about it?"

Her father and mother, however, were not so surprised as she supposed they would be, for they rather expected such an unhappy termination of "the love affair," if such it might be called.

Evidently excited, yet holding himself well under control, her father replied:

"Now that you're married, Vermilia, go and live with your husband. Let him take

care of you. You've made your bed, now lie in it. By Saturday evening you and all you have must go. And don't never come near this house again, Vermy Cunster. I disown you. Don't let me ever see you again. Go! Go!"

She looked at her mother, who did not speak a word.

Her feeble hopes shattered, her worst fears realized, the bride of an hour hurried to her room weeping, and spent the night in tears, and in heaping maledictions upon her incorrigible parents.

As to Mr. Poofer, he was not particularly anxious to divulge the secret of his marriage to his mother and Mr. Updick, who were having a pleasant chat together when he returned to his home. But the truth was instantly suspected by his friend, who at once accused him of being a benedict.

"I know you've ben, gone, and done it, Jack, contrary to your Mom's wishes, and mine, too, fer the matter of thet. You've ben and got married this werry night. How does I know it? By your looks. Now, Mrs. Poofer," he continued, turning to the widow,

"it's not fer me to ast him w'ere he's a-goin' to put up with his lawful and wedded wife, w'ether here or there, or sit up fer their-selves. I reckon it's none of my bus'ness. But I'll wentur the perdiction thet you'll not hev her here, and they'll not hev him there, and they's got no money to sit up house-keepin'. So wot'll they do? It's easier to find a wife, my boy," he said, turning to the young man, "than to feed one, you'll find quick's you ken say Ballymeney. Courtin's werry agree'ble, but marryin's the end on't."

"Ah!" sighed the widow.

"Now thet you've took the step, Jack, my boy, spend your evenin's with your lawful and wedded wife and not in the grog shop. You've took her fer better or fer worse, as the ketechism says, don't it? and you sees I ain't fergot the lessons o' the ketechism. Study it up. It'll do you good. And you'll not fergit it w'en you're grown old and wants to teach it to your childrens. I hopes you ain't took 'er fer the worse, my boy, but I fears. But mebbe it ain't. Who knows? Make the best of your bargain, and let drink alone. Thet's wot you've got to do.

Don't go a comin' home from thet there saloon at two or three in the mornin' and hev your wedded wife a gittin' up and a ketchin' cold, and a mournin' fer her late husband, as I knows many's the woman as has done it —many and many's the one.

"And w'ile I'm a givin' you some good adwice, my boy, I'll go further, and I'll say don't gamble. They does it at Bussley's saloon, I'm told. If you bet, you'll regret, and mebbe all the rest of this here mortal life. Lay no bets and make no debts. There, them's good sound doctrines, ain't they?

"And I'll add a word, too, 'bout sinful pleasures. Shun 'em as you would the plague of Indy. Short, sinful pleasures cost long and bitter sufferin' and sorrer. Sins hatch out sorrers sure's hens hatches out chicks.

"The road to hell's smooth, but it's awful slip'ry. Many's the man I sees a slippin' and a slidin' down faster and faster, till whizz and jewwhallop! they's over the percipice, over and gone forever and ever. Amen—as the ketechism closes."

Through this long discourse the young man sat in sullen silence, with eyes bent upon

the floor; and when Mr. Updick had concluded he rose slowly from his chair, and, without a word, not even so much as a good-night, went off to the saloon, where he spent the most of this first night of his married life, staggering home about three o'clock in the morning, to the alarm and distress of his mother, and the evident displeasure of Mrs. Boveen and Mr. Maybeer on the floor below, who, roused from their peaceful slumbers, poked their heads out of their respective half-opened doors, and soundly berated him.

CHAPTER XVI

Stormy Times

If peace and good-will prevailed between employers and employed they certainly did not prevail in every household. There were stormy times, for example, in Mrs. Poofer's flat.

Young Mr. Poofer insisted, and strenuously so, upon bringing his bride home; and his mother as strenuously declared he should not. So bitter at times was the contention that Mr. Updick felt called upon to step in between them figuratively speaking, and act as a peacemaker.

"Now don't," he pleaded, "be like two fightin' cocks a flyin' up, and a jumpin' at each other. Thet's not the way fer mother and son to be a goin' on, leastways it ain't the way of peace, as I looks at it."

The unruly son finally took his own way and brought his bride home, under the strong protest of his mother. And as for the bride,

ner home-coming was anything but an agreeable experience, or at least would have proved such to most persons. There are some, however, and she was one of the kind, who seem to take delight in a "scrimmage," who seem to enjoy a "jawing," and who are never so happy as when engaged in a "shindy."

How these two Poofer women did fight, even like the proverbial cat and dog, beginning the very moment when the bride stepped over the threshold of her new home!

"I didn't ast you here, Vermy Cunster; and I don't want you here neither. You and Jimmy'd better git elsewheres, I can tell you," was the greeting she received.

"And I ain't a mindin' you, Mrs. Poofer. I'm Jimmy's wife. And it's him I'm a goin' to live with, wherever he is. And you needn't put on airs nor be cross neither, for I won't stand it, that I won't. There now—onct for all, I won't stand it!"

The battle, thus begun, waged fiercely, and continued along, with brief respites of no speaking, when each side gained strength and ammunition for its renewal.

In these family feuds Mr. Poofer some-

times sided with his wife, sometimes with his mother, and sometimes with neither, but, getting out of the way of both, would slink off to the saloon, which he now frequently patronized, that he might be rid of the din and clatter in his home. Poor man! Between these two women he led a dog's life of it indeed. His wife sought in every way to prejudice him against his mother; and his mother sought to win him away from his wife. So the dove of peace having folded its wings and hied away, the harassed man sought more congenial environment.

The presence of Mr. Updick, although it had no perceptible effect in cooling the fiery temper of the younger Mrs. Poofer, was decidedly effective in soothing the perturbed spirit of her mother-in-law. As a close friend of both mother and son that worthy man was naturally much distressed at these family infelicities.

"I'll speak plain like to you, Jack," he said to the young man soon after he had brought his bride home. "And you'll not be offenced w'en your father's friend, and your friend, too, fer the matter of thet, speaks out his

mind plain and simple like. You've married a tartar, Jack, my boy. Thet's plain's Donaghadee. You knows it. I knows it. And I'll guess your mother knows it, too. Wot then? W'y, w'en the weather's stormy, weather the storm. Put up with the change you've made, make the best on't, and manage your wessel accordin'. Sometimes you'll hev to put on all sail, and scud afore the breeze, and steer out and off into deep water; and sometimes furl ev'ry sail, and drift along. Thet's wot you've got to do, Jack, my boy. Be captain of your wessel. A ship as has two captain's like a wessel with two rudders, fore and aft, a both bein' pulled at onct. It's onhandy; werry onhandy.

"I knows men as was brave, and marches up afore a gun ready to blow 'em up, but afore a broomstick in their beloved wife's hands trimbles, and quails, and falls like a tree afore a African simon. Be brave, my boy, and stand up firm-like, wot e'er be the tides.

"I've heerd tell of the jawbone of an ass thet did somethin', and they's plenty of 'em to-day a doin'.

"If your wife's steel ready to strike, don't be flint to make the fire fly. You ken shet up an umberel, but you can't shet up so easy a scoldin' woman, I reckon.

"But, wotever troubles comes don't go a seekin' to drown 'em in drink, or the drink'll drownd you. Swim in sin, and you'll sink in sorrer. Now you knows, Jack, I'm ag'in all liquor drinkin'. And I'm agoin' to speak out plain like to you onct more, my boy. I fears you's a gittin' to like your grog all too well; like the man who kisses his dog, and the dog ups and bites 'im on the lip.

"Pots of beer costs many's the tear. I've seen it, my boy. Oh, yes; I've seen it, and I knows, too, thet beer makes men queer, and worse, brings 'em to their bier. And I'll put in a word ag'inst baccy, too. I'd adwise you to leave it strictly alone, as my mother adwises me w'en a boy and a sneakin' to the pantry to snuckle some jell. 'Leave it strictly alone, Willie,' she says, 'or——,' and she says no more, but I fills out the blank in my mind's eye, 's the poet says, and I goes without the jell. Now, then, leave this baccy strictly alone, or——. And I'll fill out the

blank fer you, too. It'll play tunes on your nerves, and jangle 'em all up, and thet makes you all cross and ugly like. And I've heerd, too, of baccy heart. And it ain't the kind of a heart you need neither, my boy. I'll not deny there was the time w'en I enjoyed my pipe of baccy's well's any man. But w'en I sees my father in his sixties all broke up like by his use of it, I says, look a here, Billy Updick, you'd a better stop, and stop instanter, or you'll be like your father, nervous and good-fer-nothin', and old afore your time. So I goes up to my room in the loft, pitches my pipe outer the winder, and jest then a horse comes along, steps onto it, and smashes it to smithereens; and the little baccy I has I scatters to the winds, 's the poet says, though there ain't much po'try as I ken see 'bout the filthy weed, w'ich it's right and accoorately called.

"But there! I've got off the track. But we'll git on ag'in, and git back to your wedded wife. Treat 'er fair and square, Jack. If she nags like a persistent, buzzin' fly a 'noyin', a irritatin', a raspin' to the nerves, and arousin' evil passions in the bosom, w'y

don't give way. It's foolish to sprain yer wrist a slappin' at a buzzin' insec'.

"Your life'll not be all sunshine. And I reckon it's better so, fer I've heerd thet all sunshine makes the desert, and I 'spose it's true.

"Marriage opens the eyes thet love's blinded; and they's wonderful disclosures, I'll guess. W'en the primpin's, and the smiles, and the wiles's wantin', the dishabill,—and thet's French, too, my boy, as I'll tek the liberty of a repeatin' ag'in fer emph'sis,—the dishabill ain't so takin'.

"They's plural wives out yon in Utah, they says, but they's sing'lar ones right in this werry town. You've not got plural wives, Jack, but mebbe you've got a sing'lar one. If so, go cautious like, tek in your sails, go slow round the sharp rocks, and make your way into deep and quiet water. There now! Good-night," and Mr. Updick departed.

CHAPTER XVII

A Separation

Things did not move along at all smoothly at the Poofers', as we have seen, Mr. Poofer declaring, with considerable exaggeration, it is true, that his home was a "perfect hell," meaning a great deal thereby. The adjective "perfect" does not seem to agree with, nor fit the noun "hell," but doubtless there is disagreement and misfit in hell, too, where everything is at cross purposes with everything else.

How the tongues of the two women did clatter and clack! There was perpetual warfare between these two, with brilliant maneuvers, quick attacts, skulking guerilla skirmishes, with deception, and treachery, and feints, and blustering, and displays of courage—all of the *arts* of warfare, indeed, in all their *perfection*. And this state of warfare continued for a whole month, as long as the women lived under the same roof.

Wearied at length with the long-protracted war, with peace nowhere in sight, young Mrs. Poofer pled with her husband to move anywhere out of sight and sound of "the old tarmagant," as she called her mother-in-law, even threatening to leave him did he not accede to her wish at once. The elder Mrs. Poofer, anxious as she was to be rid of her belligerent daughter-in-law, was by no means anxious to be rid of her son, for she had some affection for him; and then, too, his week's board, which, to his credit be it said, he always paid to her promptly when he had work, was a great consideration. The thought of living alone, and of having to take in more washing to meet expenses, or of renting her son's room to another, who might prove disagreeable and perhaps delinquent as to rent, worried her not a little.

One day at noon after a stormy battle, when, to speak figuratively, shot and shell had fallen thick and fast, Mr. Poofer came home to find no dinner ready, his mother flushed and excited, his wife seated on her packed trunk weeping bitterly, and declaring her firm determination not for worlds to stay another

day in that place to be insulted, abused, and fought with. She would go home first, she said, that she would. If he didn't care, she did. If he wouldn't go, she would. If he was afraid of her father, she wasn't. And so on and so on.

The young husband, seeing his wife in tears, and hearing her recount again, as so often before, his mother's ill-treatment of her, was touched, and his heart was softened toward her, but hardened toward his mother, when he soundly berated in language obscure to the more refined. Then he remembered to have seen a house for rent in Green Court, a half a mile away, and hastening thither he found it was still to let. Hurrying to the agent he took the house, paying a week's rent in advance, for he had just received his week's pay. He came into immediate possession of the house, and that very afternoon a wagon appeared to take his wife's trunk, and the furniture of the one room, to their new home.

Mrs. Poofer, Jr., began housekeeping by sweeping out the floor of the room, which was to be their bedroom, with an old well-worn broom she happily discovered in the

back yard; and directing the arrangement of the few pieces of furniture and the trunk as they were unloaded and brought in from the wagon.

There was furniture enough for one room only, and all the other nine or ten rooms of the house were bare and cheerless. The young couple had no cooking utensils, and no stove to cook with if they had had the pots and pans, and no food to be prepared if they had had facilities for cooking. There were few pennies remaining in the family purse, so their first meal in their new home consisted of a small loaf of bread and pint of milk. This was not an ideal start in housekeeping, perhaps, yet the young couple really took some pleasure in being alone in their new home. That night Mr. Poofer even forsook the saloon and went without his dram; and his wife—well, she kept down her temper, and held in her tongue with bit and bridle, as it were.

So the young couple started housekeeping. But Mrs. Poofer was amibitious; she desired to make some mark in the neighborhood. She roused herself, therefore, to meet the exi-

gency, and the very next day had the house furnished from top to bottom with second-hand furniture—and much of it looked to be third or fourth-hand—and with just as little as was possible to get along with if the rooms were to be occupied, all of which was procured on the installment plan, of course. But why furnish the whole house for two persons? A rudely painted sign fastened at the side of the front door bore the following announcement to the general public, "BOARDING—MRS. POOFER." And there is found the answer to the question.

Boarders came one after another until the house was full. Some came and, as was to be expected, mysteriously disappeared in a day or two without settling their bills. Gradually, however, came a better and a more permanent class of boarders, who paid their bills more or less promptly, hard working men and women, honest at least. As to the kind of board paid for, however, let nothing be said.

Seeing his wife so energetic, and so successful, too, in her venture, Mr. Poofer thought his own energy needed a rest. So he lessened his days of work at the mill and

increased his hours at the saloon. He descended lower and lower, soon becoming a lazy, careless, shiftless, drunken lounger at the corner groggery. A corresponding change was noted, too, in Mrs. Poofer, who became slouchy, untidy, slovenly, a common scold, quarreling and fault-finding, not only with her husband, but with her boarders at times as well, and losing many a good boarder in consequence.

The visits of Mr. Updick to this home were few and far between, for Mrs. Poofer had taken an intense dislike to him, and was at no pains to conceal it, for she regarded him as the friend of her husband's mother, and consequently her enemy; and then, too, Mr. Poofer was rarely at home. When Mr. Updick did come it was always with words of sound common sense and tender admonition for the wayward young man, whom he still loved as he might have loved his own son.

"Up and be a doin', Jack, my boy," he said to him on one occasion. "Put a drive to your work. By stiddy goin' on the hands of the clock, and of men, too, does their day's work. You're a committin' crime by wastin' time.

A lazy man's tinder fer the sparks of temptation. Up and be a doin'. Shame on you, Jack Poofer, to be a lettin' your belovin' wife do, and you a doin' little or nothin'. Runnin' dogs feels no fleas. Be industrious and trifles'll not wex you. Work's a fine tonic, good and wholesome. It warms w'en coal's dear. You grumbles and growls, my boy. Now work's a good antidoty fer a peewish, complainin' sperit.

"You says, look at your wife. Yes, I'll look at 'er; and I'll say fer her thet she's a hustler, and in consekence she's not sluggish and complainin', but puts energy even into her temper, as you well knows. Her tongue works's well's her hands. And I reckon 'twould be's well if her tongue was put under lock and key, so's 'twouldn't run clare off, and be sure of a rest.

"Rouse up yourself, Jack, my boy. Be up and a doin'. Be up and a doin'. Be up and a doin'. They's rules fer you.

"You're a keepin' late hours, too, I'm afeerd. The key to success ain't the night-key. Late hours! W'ere does they lead? To matrimonny or pen'tent'ary. They's led

you to matrimonny. Keep on at 'em and they'll lead you a merry dance to the pen'-tent'ary. You's a livin' in a zig-zag sort of a way, and the zag's worse'n the zig. You're a workin' mighty hard fer the devil's wages, I reckon, if you ain't fer man's; and you'll git 'em all paid up soon 'nough if you don't mend your ways. They's men so blinded by their evil passions, and ap'tites, and lusts thet they suffer more to be damned—and I'm not usin' the word bad, but solemn-like—than they does to be saved. Ain't it true, Jack? Don't be one of 'em. Don't! Don't!

"Slain by his own wickedness and evil habits might, I'm a thinkin', be truthfully writ on many's the tombstun.

"Now, my boy, you'd better git out a rewised wersion of your life, kerrect the errors, add a souplement, and alter the type, as I onct heerd a bookman say to his young man who was a sowin' his thorns and this'les. And it's werry good adwise fer you. And I'll give it to you jest as't stands."

But the homely, loving admonitions of his friend were unheeded by the wilful young man; and three days a week was the most he

worked, the remainder being spent for the greater part in squandering his wages at the groggery and among evil associates.

A son was born in due time to Mr. and Mrs. Poofer, and the elder Mrs. Poofer, brushing aside her feelings of animosity toward the young mother, made bold to call upon the new arrival into this vale of contrarieties. And there over the new-born babe a reconciliation, partial at least, was effected between the two women, and between Mr. Poofer and his mother, the latter returning to her home as proud as any grandma could be of her grandson, telling Mr. Updick that he ought to go and see the baby, for he was a wonder. She had never seen his like before, except Jimmy, and the dear child was so like his father.

The coming of the child, however, did not cause the father to mend his ways. The fretting of the infant annoyed him, and drove him even more from home, though, dear knows, he was little enough at home before; and drink sank him lower and lower in degradation and sin.

CHAPTER XVIII

Which Is the Last

Eight years have passed. Mr. Poofer continued in his evil course, going with accelerating speed down the broad way that leads to destruction, until he died in agony produced by alcohol and debauchery, befriended by Mr. Updick to the very last.

His widow, more careless and slovenly in appearance and manner, and in the care of her house, continues to keep boarders, her father and mother not relenting a whit, but stubbornly rejecting all her advances toward reconciliation, and obstinately refusing to help her or her child in any way whatsoever.

The boy, young Master Poofer, inheriting and early exhibiting his father's careless, indolent disposition, and his mother's slovenliness and fiery temper, an unhappy combination, runs the streets uncontrolled and uncontrollable, a constant worry and trouble to his mother, and a terror and pest to the neighborhood.

Mr. Updick, barred out by the fiery temper and lashing tongue of Mrs. Poofer, Jr., since the death of his young friend no longer visits that home. He still continues, however, his friendly visits to Mrs. Poofer, Sr., but has not yet proposed marriage, nor does he seem likely ever so to do—but who knows? When we hear of him again it may be as a benedict.

The temperance principles set forth and earnestly advocated by Mr. Updick, while ineffective in working reform in the case of Mr. Poofer, bore fruit in other directions, so that the patrons of the saloons and groggeries and dives have been considerably lessened, and the receipts very measurably decreased.

The result of the strike for just wages and Sunday rest has proven most satisfactory to both employers and employees, as of course it would. All concerned rejoice in the improved conditions, and wherever just wages and Sunday rest are granted, like conditions and like satisfaction will prevail.

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